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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings of the 1988 Educational Research Service survey of teacher evaluation practices and procedures in U.S. schools. The survey instrument was mailed to a random sample of 1,730 superintendents of school districts of varying size. The response rate was 52.5 percent. The first section discusses the purposes of teacher evaluation, data sources, definitions of teacher effectiveness, system design and implementation, and evaluation and reward for increased productivity. The second section presents survey results concerning teacher evaluation frequency; the governance levels involved; and evaluation responsibility, criteria, and purposes. Teacher evaluation is virtually universal, with probationary teachers evaluated a minimum of twice yearly. In many districts, tenured teachers are evaluated annually to promote professional growth and identify outstanding performance. Observation by principal is the most commonly used data-collection method. Peers or lead teachers are rarely used to observe classroom teachers. Both formative and summative evaluation aspects are necessary to ensure a minimally competent faculty, encourage continued professional development, and provide incentive for excellent teaching. Although essential to improving the quality of public education, a comprehensive teacher evaluation system is neither simple to implement nor cost-free. The third section provides examples of current teacher evaluation practice, including school board policy statements, evaluator training precepts, collective bargaining clauses, evaluation criteria, rewards, and termination and remediation procedures. Included are 23 tables and a bibliography of 90 references. (MLH)

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